

Evaluation of the Indianapolis Mayor Sponsored Charter Schools

The Excel Center Sixth-year Charter Review

2015-2016 School Year

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OFFICE OF EDUCATION INNOVATION

Office of the Mayor of Indianapolis

SIXTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

The Excel Center

August 3 – September 3, 2015

The Indianapolis Mayor's Office Sixth Year Charter Review (SYCR) is designed to assess the fourth year of the school as it fully implements the policies and procedures developed in the previous academic years. The Sixth Year Charter Review Protocol is based on the *Performance Framework*, which is used to determine a school's success relative to a common set of indicators, as well as school-based goals.

Consistent with the Indianapolis Mayor's Office Performance Framework, the following four core questions and sub-questions are examined to determine a school's success:

Is the educational program a success?

- 1.1. Is the school's academic performance meeting state expectation, as measured by Indiana's accountability system?*
- 1.2. Are students making sufficient and adequate gains, as measured by the Indiana Growth model?*
- 1.3. Does the school demonstrate that students are improving, the longer they are enrolled at the school?*
- 1.4. Is the school providing an equitable education to students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds?*
- 1.5. Is the school's attendance rate strong?*
- 1.6. Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?*
- 1.7. Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?*

Is the organization in sound fiscal health?

- 2.1. Short term Health: Does the school demonstrate the ability to pay its obligations in the next 12 months?*
- 2.2. Long term Health: Does the organization demonstrate long term financial health?*
- 2.3. Does the organization demonstrate it has adequate financial management and systems?*

Is the organization effective and well-run?

- 3.1. Is the school leader strong in his or her academic and organizational leadership?*
- 3.2. Does the school satisfactorily comply with all its organizational structure and governance obligations?*
- 3.3. Is the school's board active, knowledgeable and abiding by appropriate policies, systems and processes in its oversight?*
- 3.4. Does the school's board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?*
- 3.5. Does the school comply with applicable laws, regulations and provision of the charter agreement relating to the safety and security of the facility?*

Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

- 4.1. *Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?*
- 4.2. *Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?*
- 4.3. *For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?*
- 4.4. *Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?*
- 4.5. *Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?*
- 4.6. *Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?*
- 4.7. *Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?*
- 4.8. *Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?*
- 4.9 *Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?*
- 4.10 *Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?*

COMPLETION OF THE FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

As part of its oversight of charter schools, the Mayor's Office authorized Research & Evaluation Resources (RER) to conduct site visits of schools in their fourth year of operation. The purpose is to present the school and the Mayor's Office a professional judgment on conditions and practices at the school, which are best provided through an external perspective. This report uses multiple sources of evidence to understand the school's performance. Evidence collection begins before the visit with the review of key documents and continues on-site through additional document review, classroom visits and interviews with any number of stakeholders. Findings provided by the site visit team can be used to celebrate what the school is doing well and prioritize its areas for improvement in preparation for renewal. It is the task of the site visit team to report on the following pre-identified aspects of the *Performance Framework* and to assist the Mayor's Office in its completion of the FYCR Protocol: ***Responses to sub-questions 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 of Core Question 4.***

The outcome of this review will provide the school with a written report that includes a judgment and supporting evidence on various aspects of the school, based on a rubric of indicators¹ developed for each of the four core questions and sub-questions in the *Performance Framework*. The assessment system utilizes the following judgments:

Does not meet standard

Approaching standard

Meets standard

¹ Rubric indicators are subject to revision by the Mayor's Office.

Background and History of The Excel Center

The charter application submitted by The Excel Center stated as the mission of the school:

The mission of The Excel Center is to provide adults the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education while developing career paths in sectors of the local economy that offer better-than-average employment and growth opportunities. The school will “meet students where they are” in their education by providing a flexible structure and supportive relationships to help them manage work, life and family concerns as they achieve their educational goals.

The Excel Center opened its original campus on Michigan Street in the late summer of 2010 and easily met the predicted initial enrollment of 200 students. There has been a waiting list for positions at The Excel Center since its opening day and the initial successes of the original Michigan Street location led to the opening of two new campuses in the 2011-2012 school year—one in the Meadows neighborhood on the near east side, and another in Decatur Township on the west side of Indianapolis. These campuses were quickly followed by Franklin Road, Anderson, Kokomo, Lafayette, Richmond, and The Excel Center-West.

The school specific goals proposed for The Excel Center are motivated by the philosophy of “relationships, relevance, and rigor.” These same “three R’s” are also the focus of the Indianapolis Metropolitan High School, which is also managed by the Goodwill Education Initiatives. The original curriculum of The Excel Center was an online curriculum delivered through A+nywhere Learning System, which was available to students at all times. All students were given netbooks and progressed through learning modules that were designed to teach content aligned to Indiana Academic Standards. Licensed teachers validated the content of this material and assessed students’ mastery of the coursework. Students were able to contact staff through e-mail and instant messaging during the school’s operating hours. Students progressed through on-line material at their own pace and covered only the material that is relevant to their own personal learning plan.

While this original vision of curriculum delivery achieved some success in student achievement data, it was not as successful as expected. With input from the students themselves, The Excel Center leadership came to the conclusion that a more traditional schedule of classes would provide students with the structure to enable them to move more rapidly through their coursework. Specifically, leadership noted that many of their students were either unemployed or underemployed and had the flexibility to take a full set of classes during the day, and that when a more structured schedule was in place the students responded by working more steadily toward their degree. To that end, the leadership at The Excel Center modified their curriculum to include 8-week courses that met for up to three hours per class, four days per week. While the online curriculum remains for those students who wish to use it, the majority of Excel Center students take their courses on the 8-week schedule.

While the structure of the curriculum has undergone dramatic changes, the underlying philosophy of The Excel Center has not changed and is still based on the three “R’s:” relationships, relevance and rigor as described in The Excel Center’s charter application:

- Students in The Excel Center will develop supportive **relationships** with staff and fellow students to encourage their progress and academic engagement. They will be grouped into teams that meet bi-weekly to support each another, debrief challenges of balancing school and life concerns, and celebrate learning achievements and milestones. In addition, Excel Center coaches will facilitate these teams and meet with students to promote their continued education. These coaches will monitor progress, and where necessary, work with students to find solutions to particular life challenges that might hinder student progress.
- Students’ education will be **relevant** to their educational and career goals. Every student will develop an individual learning plan based upon his or her unique interests and abilities. The Excel Center will provide students the opportunity to connect the material they learn to skills that are helpful and necessary in work environments. Remedial and basic high school coursework will be balanced with tangible skills training that focuses on improving students’ employability. Students will enroll in local post-secondary institutions and take the first steps towards earning some form of post-secondary degree or credential. Students – many of whom will be first-time college students – will benefit from The Excel Center’s support and encouragement as they learn to navigate and succeed in post-secondary learning environments.
- The **rigor** of The Excel Center coursework is designed to prepare students to graduate from high school and be prepared for post-secondary learning environments. Students who participate in The Excel Center will complete all requirements of one of the recognized State of Indiana high school diplomas. In addition, students will prepare for and demonstrate skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary education.

Additional Student Supports

In addition to providing academic and life skills supports, The Excel Center also offers students assistance with managing their educational goals while fulfilling the needs of their families and themselves. Specifically, The Excel Center provides:

- A Learning Well health clinic for all students is provided by The Marion County Health Department. Students can receive health screenings and treatment for health concerns. A Learning Well nurse is physically present in school administrative offices to meet students for appointments during the school day.
- Goodwill Education Initiatives operates a food pantry where students and their families can pick up food, personal hygiene items and other staple goods. Students can use these resources to meet short-term needs if food security is a barrier to student success.

- Cummins Behavioral Health provides students with comprehensive mental health services. GEI contracts with Cummins to provide these assessment and treatment services for any students in need of additional health supports.
- The Excel Center provides a resource area that is open six days a week, beginning as early as 7am and closing as late as 10pm. The room is staffed by licensed teachers, resource staff and volunteers to answer students' questions and provide one-on-one instruction.
- The Excel Center provides a daycare center for the children of students currently working toward their degree.

The Four Campuses of The Excel Center authorized by the Office of Education Innovation

The success of the original Excel Center program at the Michigan Street location has led to the expansion of The Excel Center into 5 more locations that are authorized by the Office of Education Innovation: University Heights, TEC West, and the three additional sites included in this review: Meadows Street, Decatur Blvd. and Franklin Road. Each campus has its own distinct identity, despite being part of a very cohesive system. The Michigan Street campus is the original site of the first Excel Center. The students attending the Michigan Street location range from teenagers to grandmothers, and are usually from the neighborhoods adjacent to the Goodwill campus where The Excel Center is located. The Meadows Street location closely resembles the Michigan Street location but appears to be drawing a somewhat younger demographic from the near-eastside neighborhoods where The Excel Center-Meadows campus is located. The Excel Center on Decatur Blvd. educates a unique population among the four campuses, drawing heavily from the immigrant populations in Indianapolis, although many have transferred to the University Heights site due to its more convenient location in relation to their homes. There appeared to be a concomitant increase in Hispanic and Latino/a students at this site. The Franklin Road location is located on the east side of Indianapolis in the former Stonegate Early College High School. Franklin Road draws students from across the city who are drawn to the strong college preparatory focus of this campus, as well as for the friendly and welcoming staff.

The Excel Center Method

The Curriculum. Based on experiences in the first year of operation at the Michigan Street location, the curriculum of The Excel Center was dramatically changed from a focus on individual learners using online curriculum, to more structured 8-week long courses that include direct instruction, group work and independent projects. These 8-week courses offer accelerated coursework and allow students to complete anywhere from 4 to 16 credits in one 8-week session. In addition to the more traditional courses such as Algebra I and English 10, The Excel Center staff has designed hybrid, cross-discipline courses, such as American Studies and World Studies that address several of the requirements for a Core 40 diploma.

iExcel. The iExcel program is an intensive orientation and matriculation process that has been implemented since the 2011-12 academic year. The iExcel program incorporates traditional orientation activities such as course selection, standardized testing and academic counseling, with a unique set of activities designed to give the teaching staff the opportunity to get to know each student as an individual and to allow the students to get acquainted with their classmates. iExcel, which occurs over two days, also gives The Excel Center staff the opportunity to impress upon prospective students the amount of work required and the commitment necessary to succeed at The Excel Center.

Life Coaches. The Life Coaches provide essential support for students by removing roadblocks to academic progress through counseling, social support and everyday advice on topics as diverse as transportation, finding safe housing, childcare, and healthy diet. In addition to these vital services, the Life Coaches also play a substantial role in the academic life of the students. The Life Coaches meet regularly with the teaching staff and are important partners with the teaching staff to the benefit of the students.

College/Career Counselors & Goodwill Guides. As Excel Center students progressed through their education, their need for information regarding opportunities after graduation increases. In response to this need, all Excel Centers sites have College and Career Counselors to help students navigate post secondary opportunities. Part of the College and Career Counselors responsibilities is to help students determine which of the many certifications offered by The Excel Centers fit with their career goals, whether college is a good choice, and how to determine which college is right for them, as well as helping with crucial steps along the way, such as writing a resume, developing interview skills, finding financial aid, and choosing a college. Additional support for students is provided by the Goodwill Guides, who work with the coaches and students during their last term at The Excel Centers, and provide support for up to a year after graduation.

The Evaluation Process

This report represents an evaluation about performance in each of the standards and indicators that are the responsibility of RER to evaluate. These indicators: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 are outlined in the Performance Framework.

Research & Evaluation Resources staff engaged in a number of evidence-collecting activities. The focus of this evaluation was to gauge perceptions of key stakeholders at the school in relation to the areas of the performance framework that are part of the evaluation. RER conducted focus group discussions with students, staff, and parents, as well as interviews with the school administration. These focus groups and interviews were conducted at the four different campuses over a one month period, with the review of the Meadows campus taking place on August 3 & 4, 2015, at the Franklin St. location on August 14 & 15, 2015, at the Decatur Blvd. location on August 13 & 14, 2015, and the Michigan Street Location on September 17 & 18, 2015. Dr. Janet Rummel, Chief Academic Officer for the Indiana Network of Independent Schools was interviewed on August 27, 2015, Tonya Taylor, Director of Special Education, and Laura Cope, Assistant Director of Special Education at Indiana Network of Independent Schools were interviewed on August 24, 2015, and

Mr. Scott Bess, Chief Operating Officer of Goodwill Education Initiatives, was interviewed on August 3, 2015. Classroom observations were performed on site at each of the four campuses using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and the majority of the teaching staff was observed once.

In the following report, standards and indicators are listed with relevant evidence given related to the performance criteria. Following the discussion of each indicator, a summary of strengths and areas for attention are provided for the core question. The Excel Center sites each operate with a remarkable degree of autonomy; however, there are aspects of their operations that are the responsibility of Goodwill Educational Initiatives. In recognition of this arrangement, Standards 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 will be evaluated at the level of GEI and the supports it provides to The Excel Center sites, while standards 4.2, 4.7, 4.9 and 4.10 will be evaluated individually for the each of the four Excel Center locations.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

THE EXCEL CENTERS

<i>Core Question 1: Is the educational program a success?</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Core Question 2: Is the organization effective and well-run?</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Core Question 3: Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?</i>	<i>Finding</i>
<i>4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Meadows</i>	
<i>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Franklin Road</i>	
<i>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Decatur Boulevard</i>	
<i>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Michigan Street</i>	
<i>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Meadows</i>	
<i>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Franklin Road</i>	
<i>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Decatur Boulevard</i>	
<i>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Michigan Street</i>	
<i>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?</i>	Not Applicable
<i>4.9 Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Meadows</i>	
<i>4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Franklin Road</i>	
<i>4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Decatur Boulevard</i>	
<i>4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>Michigan Street</i>	
<i>4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?</i>	Meets Standard

Standard 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Meets standard	The school: a) curriculum aligns with the state standards; b) conducts systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school regularly reviews scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) has a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on the core learning objectives; e) the staff understands and uniformly uses curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction; f) programs and materials are available to deliver the curriculum effectively.

No significant concerns were found.

The curriculum at The Excel Centers is actively adapted to the needs of the student population at each of the diverse campuses. The curriculum is common across all Excel Center campuses, with the core learning objectives for each course and the basic objectives designed collaboratively with the teaching staff and leadership from all campuses participating. While the curriculum at The Excel Centers is updated on a regular basis, the update performed during the 2014-2015 academic year took on an added complexity due to the adoption of the new Indiana state standards, as well as planned changes in the Indiana testing requirements.

The curriculum has continued to be improved and refined through a collaborative process that is overseen by Janet Rummel, Chief Academic Officer for the Indiana Network of Independent Schools, and includes a team of lead teachers from each of The Excel Center locations. An examination of the curriculum maps revealed that these courses are aligned to the Indiana state standards (indicator a), and are consistently being reviewed and revised. The revision and alignment of the curriculum to the state standards was carried out through an intentional process that began in the summer of 2014 and continues to this day. Mrs. Rummel explained that the process for revamping the curriculum included representatives from all of the Excel Center campuses, including lead teachers as well as volunteer members of the teaching staff. Groups were formed based on subject area taught and area of expertise and these groups met monthly prior to a spring retreat at

French Lick, IN. At the retreat all members of the curriculum working groups met together and took a "deep dive" into the differences between the previous and the current Indiana state standards. The teams examined sample assessments, prior student outcomes and compared the rigor of the new standards to the previous standards. Based on this information, the new curriculum was designed to prepare Excel Center students for the rigors of the new assessments. This was accomplished through a process of revising and improving all of the courses across the Excel Centers curriculum, with a focus on aligning and revising courses to provide a scaffolded learning experience for the students. These revisions and improvements began during the French Lick retreat, and were completed during the 2014-15 school year. The Excel Center leadership and staff were exhaustive in their work to prepare their students for the new standards and assessments, going so far as to acquiring test items from PARC and other national assessments, examining ISTEP items to ensure that the Math A and Math B sequence provided Excel students with the foundational knowledge needed for high school level mathematics courses, and using the new national standards for adult education to ensure that their students are fully prepared to graduate high school. In addition to this foundational work on the new curriculum, Excel Center leadership and staff engage in continuous improvement on the curriculum during the school year using Blackboard discussion strings as well as regular meetings, with the curriculum workgroups posting documents, making revisions, and using discussion threads to cover any changes being made. The efficacy of this process was supported by examination of the curriculum documents provided by The Excel Center which revealed that the curriculum has clearly prioritized core-learning objectives, and that the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas is logical and cohesive (indicator d). The curriculum of The Excel Center undergoes rigorous review and revision on a frequent basis to ensure that the instruction is focused on core learning objectives and that the assessments used to determine student knowledge are accurate.

During focus groups, the teaching staff noted that they were comfortable with the process that resulted in the new curriculum, and felt that they had ample opportunity to have input into the process, regardless of whether they were part of the working groups. One teacher noted, "It's a relationship thing--we are close as a staff-- and they (the staff in the working groups) were open and free with what was going on." Another noted, "we are very opinionated people...we do not want to become a credit mill... so we had some good conversations about how to make this an effective combination of credits."

The leadership at Goodwill Education Initiatives, as well as the Directors at each campus, encourage the teaching staff to adapt the curriculum maps to the needs of their students. During focus group interviews at each site, the teaching staff reported that they felt comfortable adjusting the scope and sequencing of the content to ensure that their students' needs are met. Additionally, the teaching staff reported a focus on ensuring that the material was presented in time for testing (indicator c), with End-of-Course assessment being a particular focus. In those classes that conclude with ECA tests (Algebra I, Biology, and English 10), the curriculum maps are designed to present the information in time for testing, as well as giving the students the skills needed to pass these assessments. When asked about the challenge of both ensuring that all students fully understand the

material and presenting all of the standards in time for testing, the teaching staff noted that there are several mechanisms built in to the curriculum to allow for extra time with a particular topic, in particular time on Fridays when there is no instruction and several "extra" days built in to the curriculum schedule. As noted by one teacher, " We can't always follow the curriculum exactly. You can tell me on day 7 that I need to be covering something, but if I have a student that didn't learn what comes before I can't move on.. so I follow the students." Another noted, "that's the thing-- I love the way we have flexibility-- we have to be at one point at the end of the term, but we can go over and make sure it gets done. And we always have extra time on Friday."

As in the past, Excel Center leadership and staff have made an effort to ensure that their students are familiar with the format of the ECA's and also with the computerized administration of the exam. The teaching staff makes it a priority to present information in the same formats that will appear on the ECA's in order to familiarize the students with the types of questions they will encounter on the test, and there is a focus on ensuring that the appropriate content is covered. Each campus offers after school tutoring in both content and test taking strategies. A systematic review of The Excel Center curriculum is performed on a regular basis, with a particular focus placed on student performance on End-of-Course Assessments (indicator b). Student assessment data from all of The Excel Center sites is aggregated and examined for gaps in student knowledge and performance. This data includes student performance on the End-of-Course Assessments, as well as the data from the common assessments used across The Excel Center sites. This data is examined with the goal of providing information specific to each site, as well as for weaknesses and strengths with the curriculum as a whole.

The staff at all campuses regularly uses curriculum documents and related materials to effectively deliver instruction (indicator e). The Excel Center curriculum combines a focus on accelerated credit recovery, ECA preparation, with an additional school-wide focus on life skills and job placement. The Excel Center leadership and staff have designed a comprehensive program to deliver quality instruction while also removing barriers that may cause the students to stop their education. The faculty at each site are given some freedom to modify the individual lesson plans that instantiate the curriculum; however, the teaching staff must maintain the accelerated pace of instruction needed to finish the course in eight weeks, and they must include all the skills and knowledge needed to pass a series of common assessments. These assessments were designed to incorporate the core learning objectives for that course, and cannot be modified by the teaching staff. This arrangement ensures that the teaching staff takes full advantage of the curriculum documents provided by The Excel Center, while still giving them the freedom to use related program materials of their own choosing to differentiate their instruction for the students in their class.

Site visits to all four campuses revealed that there are sufficient materials in the classrooms to deliver the curriculum effectively (indicator f). The classrooms at all four sites were modern and well-lit, there were computer labs available for the students to use, as well as computers in most classrooms. Focus group interviews at all four sites did not reveal faculty concerns regarding curricular or other materials. Teaching staff did note that ongoing improvements in the Blackboard online system have led to the website becoming a valuable tool. Specifically, it was noted that lesson plans, videos of

classroom lectures, as well as class assignments are now available on Blackboard for many of the courses offered at The Excel Centers. As one teacher noted, "it's a good support for the students to get the class materials. They can go online and see the lesson plans for the whole term, or if they are absent they can go over it and the material covered when they return won't be new."

The development of Blackboard system is particularly beneficial given the accelerated nature of The Excel Center curriculum. It was noted both by students and by the teaching staff that if a student misses a Monday class, there will be a great deal of material covered before they have an opportunity to meet with their teachers on Friday. Consequently, they will be "playing catch up" all week and may miss crucial details of the information presented on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The availability of classroom materials on Blackboard helps to mitigate this problem.

Areas of Strength: The curriculum designed by the staff and leadership of The Excel Center is of very high quality and fulfills the unique needs of the staff and students. The combination of a common curricular core, with the flexibility given to the instructional staff to modify the lessons to meet the needs of their students has proven to be very successful.

Excel Center leadership and staff have worked extensively to revise their curriculum to meet the new Indiana state standards, utilizing several sources of information and strategies to ensure that their students are prepared to graduate with a full complement of academic and life skills.

The improvements to the Blackboard online system have been beneficial to students and staff, and should be continued.

Recommendations: None at this time.

Meadows

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

No significant concerns were found.

Classroom observations of five classroom teachers revealed that 100% (or 5 out of 5) instructors were implementing the curriculum as it was described in their lesson plans (indicator a). A comparison of these lesson plans to the curriculum maps provided showed that the lesson plan maintained the core learning objectives, which were also reflected in the classroom lessons as delivered in 100% of classrooms. Classroom objectives were clearly posted in all of the classrooms observed, and an examination of the lesson plans provided clearly showed core objectives for the lesson, often in the form of objectives or as “students will be able to” (SWBAT’s). The pace of instruction and content delivery was of the appropriate rigor in all of the classes in which it was applicable (5 out of 5) (indicator c). Differentiated instruction, in the form of differentiation in the classroom or differentiation strategies specifically detailed in the lesson plans, was seen in 5 out of 5 classes (indicator d). Direct observation of differentiated instruction occurred during one of the five observation sessions, suggesting that there are more opportunities for the differentiation planned for in the lesson plans to occur during the class sessions. The teaching staff reported that they received sufficient feedback on instructional practices (indicator e), noting that they received consistent feedback from peers. Regarding the RISE system, they noted that they were given good feedback after classroom observations were performed by The Excel Center leadership, and that they fully understand the RISE system, having covered it during professional development.

Areas of Strength: The quality of instruction was uniformly high, with a commendable focus on core learning objectives seen in the classroom.

Recommendations: Integrating the use of differentiated instruction into more of the class time would benefit Excel Center students.

Franklin Road

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

No significant concerns were found.

Classroom observations of six classroom teachers revealed that 100% (or 6 out of 6) instructors were implementing the curriculum as it was described in their lesson plans (indicator a). A comparison of these lesson plans to the curriculum maps provided showed that the lesson plan maintained the core learning objectives, which were also reflected in the classroom lessons as delivered or were clearly posted in 100% (6 out of 6) of classrooms (indicator b). The pace of instruction and content delivery was of the appropriate rigor 100% of classrooms (4 out of 6) (indicator c). Differentiated instruction was seen in 100% of the classes, with the differentiation strategies being implemented in the classroom during the classroom observation, or specifically noted in the lesson plan (indicator d). Direct observation of differentiated instruction occurred during two of the six observation sessions, suggesting that there are more opportunities for the differentiation planned for in the lesson plans to occur during the class sessions. The teaching staff reported that they received sufficient feedback on instructional practices (indicator e), noting that they were comfortable with the RISE system and the professional development opportunities implemented to help them learn about RISE. They also noted weekly professional development ensuring that they understand the RISE system and how it is applied to their practices.

Areas of Strength: The instruction observed in the classroom fully implemented the curriculum as designed.

Recommendations: Integrating the use of differentiated instruction into more of the class time would benefit Excel Center students.

Decatur Boulevard

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

No significant concerns were found.

Classroom observations of four classroom teachers revealed that 100% (or 5 out of 5) instructors were implementing the curriculum as it was described in their lesson plans (indicator a). A comparison of these lesson plans to the curriculum maps provided showed that the lesson plan maintained the core learning objectives, which were also reflected in the classroom lessons as delivered in 100% of classrooms (indicator b). Classroom objectives were clearly posted in 5 of the 5 classrooms observed. The pace of instruction and content delivery was of the appropriate rigor in 5 of the 5 classes observed (indicator c). Differentiated instruction was seen in 4 out of 5 with the differentiation strategies being implemented in the classroom during the classroom observation or specifically noted in the lesson plan (indicator d). Direct observation of differentiated instruction occurred during one of the five observation sessions, suggesting that there are more opportunities for the differentiation planned for in the lesson plans to occur during the class sessions. The teaching staff reported that they were knowledgeable in the RISE evaluation system, and noted that their professional development included covering the domains of the RISE system (indicator e).

Areas of Strength: The instruction observed in the classroom fully implemented the curriculum as designed.

Recommendations: Integrating the use of differentiated instruction into more of the class time would benefit Excel Center students.

Michigan Street

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

No significant concerns were found.

Classroom observations of four classroom teachers revealed that 100% (or 7 out of 7) instructors were implementing the curriculum as it was described in their lesson plans (indicator a). A comparison of these lesson plans to the curriculum maps provided showed that the lesson plan maintained the core learning objectives, which were also reflected in the classroom lessons as delivered in 100% of classrooms (indicator b). Classroom objectives were clearly posted in 7 of the 7 classrooms observed. The pace of instruction and content delivery was of the appropriate rigor in 6 of the 7 classes observed (indicator c). Differentiated instruction was seen in 7 out of 7 with the differentiation strategies being implemented in the classroom during the classroom observation or specifically noted in the lesson plan (indicator d). Direct observation of differentiated instruction occurred during two of the seven observation sessions, suggesting that there are more opportunities for the differentiation planned for in the lesson plans to occur during the class sessions. The teaching staff reports that they are evaluated at least four times a year, and that these evaluations are part of the RISE system. They expressed satisfaction with the RISE teacher evaluation system and also with their understanding of the system (indicator e).

Areas of Strength: The instruction observed in the classroom fully implemented the curriculum as designed.

Recommendations: Integrating the use of differentiated instruction into more of the class time would benefit Excel Center students.

4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in two or more of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) there is a lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance are available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in one of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) there is a lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance are available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Meets standard	The school: a) has challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) has high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) has sufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) presents opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) meets or exceeds Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.

No significant concerns were found.

The common curriculum shared across the four Excel Center sites meets or exceeds the Core 40 graduation requirements, and students are encouraged to excel and move ahead in their goal of attaining a high school diploma (indicator e).

The focus on post-secondary opportunities at The Excel Centers includes job placement, technical or associates degrees, or attending community or 4-year colleges. The Excel Centers are providing opportunities for their students to achieve certifications in career areas that are currently showing growth in job opportunities such as Customer Service, Forklift Operation, Pharmacy Technician, Certified Nurse's Assistant, Early Childhood, CompTIA A+, Safety and Manufacturing Logistics, and Hire Technology (through Conexis), Aviation (through FedEx), Dental Assistant, Medical Billing, and Phlebotomy, to name just a few. All of these certifications are offered at no cost to the students, with the cost of the programs (some up to \$1,500 per student) either waived by the certification providers, paid for by the Department of Workforce Development, or covered through donations from The Excel Center stakeholders. In addition to the certifications requiring challenging coursework, students are also encouraged to pursue high-level college coursework through the A+ system (indicators a & d). The Excel Centers all have high expectations for their students in regard to post-secondary academic and vocational opportunities (indicator b). The College and Career Readiness Coaches encourage students to pursue post-secondary education by providing assistance

with college applications, filling out the FAFSA form, and providing trips to college campuses and College Nights.

In addition to providing Excel students with the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and professional certification, the four Excel Centers are now offering their students education in the “soft skills” that they may lack. Many Excel Center students have benefitted from this new focus on the skills needed to interview successfully, behave professionally, and retain a job once employed. During the students' last term, they attend a 4 week Senior Seminar, taught by either a Goodwill Guide or a College and Career Coach, where they develop skills such as resume development, interview skills, how to apply for jobs online, and how to dress and speak at interviews. In addition to providing instruction in soft skills, the Senior Seminar also gives students the opportunity to practice their interview techniques. The final week of the course is a mock interview, complete with Excel Center staff to conduct the interviews, as well as staff from Talent Source, another Goodwill initiative, and Excel Center teachers and coaches to observe the student during the mock interview.

Currently, all four of The Excel Centers have been fully staffed with Life Coaches and College and Career Coaches. In addition to the supports for post-secondary opportunities offered by the coaching staff, students at The Excel Centers have can consult with a Goodwill Guide who will work with them both during their time at The Excel Centers as well as post-graduation. It is worth noting that Excel Center students have had access to the Goodwill Guides program for several years, but a recent focus on improving the academic and life coaches have brought their services to the forefront. At least one site (Franklin St.) has a Goodwill Guide on site full time, and another full-time guide is shared between the other sites. The job description of the Goodwill Guides is similar to that of the Life Coaches provided by The Excel Centers, with the Guides beginning to work with a student during the last 8 weeks of their time at the The Excel Center and then following up with that student for the next year. During this year the Guide will stay in contact with the Excel graduate, help them find employment if they need a job, or help them to change jobs if they need to change. The Goodwill Guides also organize neighborhood Hiring Fairs, where employers with positions to be filled can meet Excel Center graduates with the skill set they need. Hiring Fairs have averaged 40 Excel Center graduates and, on average, 15 employers attending. One recent Hiring Fair resulted in 6 Excel Center grads being hired on the spot, and 9 more graduates being offered jobs at a later date.

As noted above, all of The Excel Centers have adequate staff and materials to inform students of post-secondary options (indicator c). The Life Coaches and College and Career Counselors provide information to students regarding their options after graduation, while the Goodwill Guides provide crucial follow-up with students post-graduation. As the system of supports for The Excel Center students has grown, it became clear to The Excel Center leadership that all the resources offered to Excel Center students needed to be fully integrated and managed as a whole. Consequently, during this academic year the support services offered to Excel Center students will be supervised by Betsy Delgado, who will ensure that the coaching and student support staff at The Excel Centers receive high quality professional development, as well as evaluation and feedback on their performance at the Excel Centers.

Because of the unique nature of The Excel Center students, there is very little need for extra-curricular activities such as athletics and clubs, although each of The Excel Center sites provides opportunities for students to interact socially and build community. Recent activities have included a prom, family reading nights, and potluck dinners (indicator d). The Excel Center also provides activities that relate to college and career success, such as campus trips to local universities and colleges and, as noted above, Hiring and Job Fairs.

Areas of Strength: The staff at all four The Excel Center sites are helpful and supportive of the students achieving their goal of earning a high school diploma, and equally important, the staff encourages the students to set ambitious goals for their lives after they have their diploma.

Recommendations: Increase the presence of the Goodwill Guides program at all Excel Center sites.

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in two or more of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in one of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Meets standard	The school: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is sufficient frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.

No significant concerns were found.

The Excel Center effectively uses standardized assessments throughout a student's education. The SRI standardized assessment is administered to each student during the iExcel orientation process, and that data is used to design a remediation plan (if necessary) and the student's course schedule. There is an effective focus on the End-of-Course Assessments, and if students are required to take or retake the test the data from their previous testing is used to better prepare them for the ECA. These results are shared with both the teaching and coaching staff and are provided in time to be useful in planning the best educational course for each individual student (indicator b).

In addition to using standardized testing data, summative assessments based on the common Excel Center curriculum are administered by all classroom instructors. Classroom instructors design their own ongoing assessments and exams that are given with sufficient frequency to inform instructional decisions (indicator d). Further, each course assesses students' knowledge of the course objectives and standards using a common final exam that is administered at all of The Excel Center sites. These final exams are written by the staff teaching in each course area across all The Excel Center sites and are based upon the core learning objectives and goals that are laid out in the common curriculum map. The process of aligning the curriculum to the Indiana state standards described in Standard 4.1 also serves to ensure that assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards (indicator a). The exams are reviewed and updated as needed, with any revisions to the exams, or to the courses themselves, reviewed by Mrs. Rummel. The results of the exams are used to inform curricular adjustments at each Excel Center site, as well as in the curriculum being

implemented across all sites. The teaching staff at each site meets periodically to examine student data and to review the current curriculum. If several of the teaching staff notes the same trend in the data, an adjustment is made to the system-wide curriculum map and that revised curriculum map is sent to all the teaching staff teaching that course (indicator e). This process is well designed and is particularly important to the success of The Excel Center. This curricular revision based on student data appears to be an ongoing process at The Excel Center and allows for the flexibility needed to maintain the responsiveness of the curriculum.

In addition to the written exams administered as part of the overall course curriculum, the teaching staff reported that they are encouraged to use a variety of assessments (indicator c). Focus group interviews with the teaching and coaching staff reinforced the importance of gathering and sharing student data, with the teachers and coaches describing a mix of standardized assessments and in-class assessments. Teaching staff at all four sites noted that they use the SRI data from the IExcel program to help determine students' course requirements or need for remediation. Additional standardized data comes from an Acuity diagnostic test for math skills that was developed with Mrs. Rummel for use across The Excel Center sites. The diagnostic was designed by a team of math instructors from across the different sites, with a focus on presenting students with the type of math problems they will be presented with during their time at The Excel Centers. This data is shared with coaches and teachers and is used to determine if a student needs to be placed in Math Lab, or if they can proceed directly to the Algebra/Geometry sequence. In addition to the use of standardized assessment, it is common practice at all four sites for teaching staff to begin class with a "do now" to serve as a diagnostic of what was retained from previous lessons, and "exit tickets" to be used as data to design the lesson for the next day. The use of these formative assessments was also noted during classroom observations at all four sites. These are in addition to the unit tests or quizzes designed by individual instructors and the end of course exams designed to be used with The Excel Center curriculum, thus providing sufficient frequency of assessments to inform instructional decisions (indicator d).

All of this classroom data, as well as data regarding students' developing soft skills, outlook towards their education, and any barriers that might have arisen are shared on a regular basis with the school leadership, classroom teachers and student support staff. The teaching staff described a process of data use that incorporates their classroom assessments with data from SRI, Acuity, and Accuplacer, which is then combined to form data trackers for each student. Each site has developed a system to share data between teachers, coaches, and school leadership, with two sites, Franklin St. and Decatur, using a Google Doc initially developed at Franklin St., to track students progress, and the other sites using their own student tracking system. At each site assessment data, as well as insights into the student's life circumstances and any barriers that could interrupt the student's education, are available for the Excel Center staff. Crucially, at all four sites the coaches, teachers and leadership all expressed a reliance on these common student data documents, and have established site-wide practices for their use. At Decatur., the teaching and coaching staff meet weekly to examine the trends in the GoogleDoc and in Harmony, as well as discuss individual students and their progress. The entire staff meets weekly to review a summary of student data for the site as a whole, with each

staff member choosing one or two students they are most concerned about to discuss in depth. The staff at Franklin Road described a slightly different process. Rather than relying on weekly meetings, the teachers review student progress through Harmony and the GoogleDoc, and use time during the school day to talk to coaches and other teachers about their students. This more informal, but continuous, monitoring of the students data fits well with the culture of the Franklin Street location and has proven to be very effective. Finally, at the Meadows the staff employs "student slides" which are snapshots of each student that are shared with the entire Meadows staff. The data on the slides is used to drive discussions regarding the students every Friday. The use of the student data slides is appreciated by the Meadows staff, with teachers noting that "everyone in the school knows what is happening (with the student). We can see how they are performing in other classes, and we can put a plan together and work as a team." They also noted that "the coaches usually already know what is happening because they (the students) have come to their coach."

Areas of Strength: Assessment results at The Excel Center are used to revise the curriculum in a very responsive and effective fashion. The system currently in place allows for flexibility in curriculum based on student data, but also ensures that there is a framework in place to provide a quality curriculum.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members; b) the school deploys sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.

No significant concerns were found.

All teachers at all four sites of The Excel Center are certified or credentialed in their teaching area, or have the appropriate licensure to teach. The teachers are teaching a course load that is manageable, and the various staff members have distinct roles (indicator b). The teachers are all teaching in areas in which they are certified (indicator c). Overall, the staff is deployed to best utilize their skills and training. The Excel Centers have experienced substantial growth since their original authorization, and many of the new leadership positions at the new Excel Center sites have been filled by promoting from within the ranks of the talented teaching and coaching. This practice has allowed the new sites to quickly hit their stride, but has sometimes left the more established sites to hire new staff who do not have the experience and knowledge of The Excel Centers possessed by their predecessors. To counter this problem, leadership at The Excel Centers have begun a “Leadership Academy” that identifies and trains potential leaders from within the ranks of current Excel Center employees who can quickly move into new leadership positions at new sites, or into leadership at established sites in the case of staff turnover. The development of the Leadership Academy has also been a tool for staff retention by providing talented staff members with the opportunity for advancement within The Excel Center’s structure.

The student population at The Excel Center sites represents a wide diversity of age, socio-economic background, ethnicities and cultures. Further, the 8-week courses, the interdisciplinary teaching, and the close relationships that develop between the students, coaches, and teaching staff means that the

hiring process is crucial for the success of The Excel Centers. There have been several advances in the processes used to hire staff for The Excel Centers. Most notably, the Employee and Organizational Development Department from Goodwill Industries plays a less prominent role in the selection of job candidates, with the leadership of The Excel Center heavily involved in the initial filtering of job candidates. An onsite interview protocol that includes representatives from the teaching and coaching staff, in addition to the school leadership team, is still being implemented across The Excel Center sites. This process has continued to be extremely successful and has led to The Excel Centers to hire extremely talented and dedicated faculty and support staff. The success of the hiring processes is particularly evident in the quality of the staff members that have been promoted to leadership positions across the nine Excel Center sites. The processes used to hire new school leaders, or promote current Excel Center staff to leadership positions has also been improved. The current procedures include the job candidates developing a 5 year plan specific to The Excel Center site they hope to lead, as well as the traditional interviews with staff and students at the site. The process of developing a 5 year plan has allowed school leaders to "hit the ground running" at the new site based on their work developing their plan. This process also allows The Excel Center leadership to determine if there is a good fit between the vision and goals of the prospective school leader and the site he or she hopes to lead.

The professional development provided by The Excel Center has adapted and grown as the needs of The Excel Centers have changed. Professional development for the teaching staff at all of The Excel Center sites occurs during regular meetings across all the sites. During focus group interviews the teachers described a series of professional development opportunities that ranged from The Excel Center conference that included all staff and leadership from The Excel Center sites gathering to discuss best-practices in adult education and credit recovery, to Friday afternoon meetings at each site attended by the teaching and coaching staff where individual student needs are discussed. The teaching staff reported that they found all the professional development activities provided by The Excel Centers to be valuable and to move them forward professionally. In addition to the opportunities afforded by The Excel Center conference, there are also opportunities for the teaching staff within a subject area from all of the Excel campuses to meet and share their experiences. Recognizing the need for quality professional development, the leadership at The Excel Center has adapted the eight-week schedule to provide breaks between sessions for the staff to participate in further professional development. The staff at all four sites found The Excel Center conference, which included staff from all of The Excel Centers across the state, to be particularly rewarding. Mrs. Rummel also provides valuable professional development at each Excel Center site, visiting each several times a year to present to the staff on topics as varied as the use of placement scores and school transcripts for student scheduling, the details of the teacher evaluation system in place at The Excel Centers, a "gallery walk" of The Excel Center curriculum for the teaching staff, and sessions on the use of assessments in the context of The Excel Center model.

The Excel Center is already implementing the RISE evaluation program, and focus group interviews and discussions with school leaders revealed that the staff and leadership are happy with the frequency and content of the teacher evaluation system (indicator f). The teaching staff has the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the teacher evaluation system during the professional

development sessions, through discussions with their school leader, or on BlackBoard discussion groups.

Areas of Strength: The leadership has developed a very effective hiring process that has allowed them to hire a staff of dedicated and mission-driven instructors.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>both</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Meets standard	The school: a) has a mission that is shared by all stakeholders; b) has stakeholders possessing widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.

No significant concerns were found.

Focus group interviews with staff, students, and leadership at each of the four sites evaluated revealed that all stakeholders in The Excel Center are knowledgeable and committed to the school's mission (indicators a & b). Interviews with stakeholders revealed that they fully understand and agree with The Excel Center mission to provide students who have found it difficult to finish their high school diploma with the opportunity to finish their diploma in an environment that is flexible and respectful of their needs, takes into consideration the stresses of work and family, and can accommodate students who need three credits to graduate as well as those who only have three credits completed.

When asked about the school mission, one member of the teaching staff summarized it as "working to enrich the community by providing that second chance to adults to get their education." Another noted that the goal is to "break the cycle of poverty by providing a diploma and help them to be college and career ready."

Areas of Strength: The School Mission is compelling and reflects what is happening every day at The Excel Center. The teachers are fully committed to the school vision, and both teaching staff and school leadership are in agreement as to the vision of the school.

Recommendations: None at this time.

Meadows Street

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.

The Excel Center leadership, staff and students have created an environment that fully supports and encourages the success of their students. Interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive, and most importantly, conducive to the success of each individual student. The student culture is one of hard work, support for each other, and a focus on the goal of the high school diploma. The students at The Excel Center are, for the most part, adults who are there by choice and they recognize that this is a unique opportunity to finish their education.

Essential to the school climate at the Meadows site, as well as to the other Excel Center sites, is the role of the Life Coaches. The teaching staff appreciates the role of the Coaches, noting that "the Coaches are a tremendous help. They free up time for me to teach." Another teacher noted that "The coaches help with my classroom management. If a student is stressed or tired, they are in class but not on task, I call their coach." It was noted that the Coaches have a unique relationship with their students, specifically, "they always encourage the students to advocate for themselves. The students dropped out for a reason, they may have communication issues with the teacher, and the Coach is their advocate."

There is a common Code of Conduct in place at all Excel Center sites, with each Director given the leeway to adapt the implementation of the code to their specific needs. Each student signs a Code of Conduct agreement to ensure that they know what is acceptable and what is not (indicator a & b). The Code of Conduct is not a cumulative system, focusing instead on the type of behaviors, rather than their frequency. The teachers at the Meadows location noted that they will often see new students exhibiting Stage 1 behaviors (for example, disrupting instruction) requiring the student's Coach and the classroom instructors to work with them. One teacher noted "we remind them that something got them (the students) here... this is why you were not successful before...do you want the diploma? and then a light will go off and they realize they have to adjust their behavior"

(indicator c). The students also reported that they value the relationships that they have built with the teaching staff.

The Meadows site also employs the Professional & Interpersonal Competencies Assessment (PICA), a rubric for evaluating students based on characteristics such as “grit,” “adaptability,” “Emotional Intelligence,” as well as attendance and goal setting, with a member of the staff who knows the student well assigning the scores. The scale used runs from 0 (Never) to 3 (Always) on items such as “Grit: persistently working towards completion of goals in spite of obstacles, difficulties or discouragement.” Every Monday at the Meadows site there is a school-wide presentation on one of the character traits in the PICA. The chosen trait is then woven through the activities for the week, both to illustrate what is meant by that trait and to encourage the students to display that trait in their school and in their lives. The students are then evaluated by the Meadows staff for these character traits prior to being transitioned to the College and Career Counselors prior to graduation. (Interactions between faculty and leadership at the Meadows are professional and constructive (indicator d). The teaching staff reported that Ms. Warren is responsive to their needs and "provides great leadership at the Meadows site. ”

Areas of Strength: The staff at The Excel Center-Meadows have created a school culture that fosters respect and individual growth. As a consequence, staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students. The students themselves strive to create a positive school culture; very few disciplinary incidents have been noted.

Recommendations: None at this time.

Franklin Road

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.

The Excel Center-Franklin Road uses the Code of Conduct that is implemented across The Excel Center sites. This Code of Conduct is explained to students during the iExcel process and is well understood by staff and students alike (indicators a & b). Interactions between faculty and students at Franklin Road were observed to be respectful and supportive (indicator c). The staff has noted that "we have a family at Franklin. We are constantly outside of our comfort zone because the (the students) push you to should who you are... you can't be anything but yourself at The Excel Center." Part of the successful culture at the Franklin Rd. site is the use of "Excel Bucks." Excel Bucks are awarded to students by the staff for a variety of different reasons, such as exemplifying a PICA trait, exceeding expectations in their schoolwork, or gaining a long sought goal. The staff see the Excel Bucks as "a way to encourage students to move forward. There are guidelines for what they get Excel Bucks for, and it gives us the change to talk them (The Excel Center values) over with students." The teachers report that they have some autonomy in how the Excel Bucks are distributed in their classroom and they will use them to encourage the students to work longer on a difficult problem or increase their attendance, for example. As for the students, they value The Excel Bucks both as a way to motivate them to succeed and as a source of day to day needs. They noted that items that could be bought with the Excel Bucks included gas cards, grooming items and food.

Interactions between the faculty and administration are professional and constructive at the Franklin Street Excel Center (indicator d). Observations made during the site visit revealed that the teaching staff works well together and that all of the staff felt that the school leadership was open and available. As one staff member noted " we always have open door with Kristen and Corey. Compared to a traditional school, they are always available. By the time I saw the principal at my old school it was always too late!"

Areas of Strength: The staff at The Excel Center-Franklin Road have created a school culture that fosters respect and individual growth. As a consequence, staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students. The students themselves strive to create a positive school culture; very few disciplinary incidents have been noted.

Recommendations: None at this time.

Decatur Boulevard

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.

The Excel Center-Decatur Boulevard uses the Code of Conduct that is implemented across The Excel Center sites. This Code of Conduct is explained to students during the iExcel process and is well understood by staff and students alike (indicators a & b). Interactions between faculty and students at Decatur Boulevard were observed to be respectful and supportive. The Decatur Blvd. Excel Center has recently undergone leadership change, with the School Director who opened the site retiring. During focus group interviews the staff reported that they had experienced a change in the school culture and that the transition had been difficult. Currently, however, the staff reported that the culture at the Decatur Boulevard site has improved under the leadership of Ms. Nicole Meyers. Of particular note is the strong relationship between the coaching and the teaching staff, with the teachers describing their coaches role as "involved in planning (the student's schedule) and they have a different relationship with the students. They have to make sure that everything is falling into place for them...and remove barriers for them. I don't know what we would do without them..." Interactions between faculty and The Excel Center-Decatur Boulevard leadership are professional and constructive (indicator d), with The Excel Center-Decatur teaching and support staff all expressing their confidence in the Director, and also that they found the Decatur Boulevard site to have a professional and respectful culture, describing it as "a relationship thing-- we are close as a staff-and the leadership is open about what is going on."

Areas of Strength: The staff at The Excel Center-Decatur Boulevard have created a school culture that fosters respect and individual growth. As a consequence, staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students. The students themselves strive to create a positive school culture; very few disciplinary incidents have been noted.

Recommendations: None at this time.

Michigan Street

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.

The Excel Center-Michigan Street uses the Code of Conduct that is implemented across The Excel Center sites. This Code of Conduct is explained to students during the iExcel process and is well understood by staff and students alike (indicators a & b). Interactions between faculty and students at Michigan Street were observed to be respectful and supportive. The students noted their relationship with the Life Coaches as being a particularly valuable aspect of the Michigan Street Excel Center. One student noted that "the best thing about The Excel Center are the coaches." The teaching staff also views the Life Coaches as a valuable asset, noting that the Coaches are essential to the success of Excel Center students. One teacher noted that "if they (the student) are not in class, the coaches will get them to class." Another added "the most important thing the Coaches do is help the student and help us (the teachers) help the student."

Interactions between faculty and The Excel Center-Michigan Street leadership is professional and constructive (indicator d). The culture at the Michigan Street site was described as "really positive--I was at (other schools) and it's a different world here--I smile a lot now." Another staff member came to the school expecting to "be tested by fire.. but I found that everyone was working, just working...the school runs really well. The respect is mutual here and everyone feeds off each other in a positive way."

Areas of Strength: Staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students. The students themselves strive to create a positive school culture; very few disciplinary incidents have been noted.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Meets standard	The school: a) has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) utilizes communications that are both timely and relevant to the parental concerns; c) communicates student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents; d) the school's communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents' native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).

The student population of The Excel Center is predominantly over 18, and there are very few whose parents are involved in their education, consequently this particular standard does not apply to The Excel Center as a whole.

4.9. Do the school's special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and is moving towards best practice?	
Does not meet standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Approaching standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>one</u> or more of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Meets standard	All of the following are evident in the school's special education files: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.

Excel Center Sites (Decatur, Franklin Road, Michigan Street, Meadows)

Fall, 2015

Azure DS Angelov, Ph.D.

This report compiles a review of all practices and procedures specific to special education services at the Excel Center sites of Decatur, Michigan Street, Franklin Road, and Meadows (EC). The results of this evaluation are based on the following pieces of data collected onsite: classroom observations, review of internal processes and procedural manuals, interviews with general education and special education staff, students with IEPs, review of 25% of IEPs housed at EC, DOE data bases, EC website, and follow up interviews with eligible families of students with IEPs at EC.

All of the following are evident in the school's special education files: (a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; (b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; (c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; (d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; (e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.

The Excel Centers included in this report are doing amazing work. Each site has a highly qualified special education teacher, their students with IEPs are making impressive academic growth, and their special education files are legally compliant. Currently, EC meets all the indicators outlined in standard 4.9.

Meadows Road

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Mr. Oscar Trujillo is the ESL coordinator for The Excel Center-Meadows, and is supported in his work with ESL students by Ms. Patrice Patton who is also WEDA trained. Currently there are approximately 13 ESL students identified at the Meadows location. Mr. Trujillo was interviewed during the Meadows site visit and was knowledgeable about current legislation regarding the education of ESL students and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Mr. Trujillo reported that he has participated in professional development opportunities relating to effective best practices in the field of ESL through the Indiana Department of Education in ESL education, as well as several webinars on the topic, as has Ms. Patton.

Mr. Trujillo is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Mr. Oscar employs effective ESL practices to ensure that The Excel Center- Meadows is in compliance with these standards. The Excel Center-Meadows students are tested during the IExcel program using WEDA Access, which identifies their level of proficiency. This testing occurs within the mandated 30 days. Students are placed into the appropriate courses, regardless of their language competency, using the same process applied to all of The Excel Center students at the Meadows. Meadows students are provided with both push-in and pull-out services, and supports and services are provided to help with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a). Specific programs currently being used to educate the ESL students and provide remediation for them are System 44 and READ 180.

Mr. Trujillo also ensures that relationships with students, parents and external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Mr. Trujillo provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education.

Mr. Trujillo, as well as the ESL Coordinators at the other Excel Center sites, benefit from the expertise of Tonya Taylor, Director of Special Education, and Laura Cope, Assistant Director of Special Education at the Indiana Network of Independent Schools, who have been providing assistance to onsite ESL staff at The Excel Centers. Ms. Taylor and Ms. Cope have designed a standardized Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for ESL students that includes basic student information such as assessment data, proficiency levels in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English, as well as list of accommodations that the student is entitled to during state required assessments, and modifications and adaptations that the student requires during classroom instruction. Finally, the ILP's contain learning goals specific to each student in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The ILP form is comprehensive and informative, and ensures that all ESL students at The Excel Centers will receive a high quality education that meets their needs as English language learners.

Franklin Road

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Ms. Heather Salsman is the ESL coordinator for The Excel Center-Franklin Road. Currently there are approximately 52 ESL students identified at Franklin Road. Ms. Heather is knowledgeable of current legislation regarding the education of ESL students and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Ms. Salsman reported that she has participated in professional development opportunities relating to effective best practices in the field of ESL through the Indiana Department of Education in ESL education, as well as several webinars on the topic.

Ms. Salsman is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Ms. Heather employs effective ESL practices to ensure that The Excel Center at Franklin Road is in compliance with these standards. Franklin Road ESL students are identified during the iExcel program through the WEDA assessment, which identifies their level of proficiency. This testing occurs within the mandated 30 days. Students are placed into the appropriate courses, regardless of their language competency, using the same process applied to all of The Excel Center students at Franklin Road. Franklin Road students are provided with both push-in and pull-out services, and supports and services are provided to help with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a). Specific programs currently being used to educate the ESL students and provide remediation for them are System 44 and READ 180.

Ms. Salsman also ensures that relationships with students, parents and external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Ms. Salsman provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education.

Decatur Boulevard

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Ms. Quin Fratzke is the ESL coordinator for The Excel Center-Decatur Boulevard. Ms. Fratzke is currently working toward her ESL certification with coursework and professional development. Ms. Fratzke is very knowledgeable in current legislation regarding the education of ESL students and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Ms. Fratzke has a Masters degree in teaching English as a second language, and has also participated in professional development opportunities relating to effective best practices in the field of ESL through the Indiana Department of Education in ESL education, as well as several webinars on the topic. Ms. Fratzke's expertise in ESL has made her a valuable resources for other ESL coordinators in The Excel Center system, with several ESL coordinators specifically noting Ms. Fratzke's willingness to share her knowledge of ESL best practices during their on-site interviews.

Ms. Fratzke is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Ms. Fratzke employs effective ESL practices to ensure that The Excel Center at Decatur Blvd. is in compliance with these standards, including (but not limited to) providing students with the mandated language proficiency testing within 30 days, notification of parents of the results of these tests, and their student's placement. Placement of ESL students is based on the grade level that is appropriate for their age rather than their language competency. Students are provided with both push-in and pull-out services and supports and services to help students with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a). She is well-versed in the READ 180 and System 44 programs currently being used to remediate ESL students at The Excel Center sites.

Ms. Fratzke also ensures that relationships with students, parents and external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Ms. Fratzke provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education.

Michigan Street

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Mr. Kevin Wiley is the ESL coordinator for the Michigan Street Excel Center. Mr. Wiley is knowledgeable in current legislation regarding the education of ESL students, and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Mr. Wiley reported that he has participated in professional development opportunities relating to effective best practices in the field of ESL. Mr. Wiley has completed courses offered by the Indiana Department of Education in ESL education, as well as several webinars on the topic. He has also completed the professional development designed to enhance the use of READ 180 and System 44, both of which are being used to remediate ESL learners English language development (ELD) and academic knowledge.

Mr. Wiley is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Mr. Wiley has employs effective ESL practices to ensure that The Excel Center at Michigan Street is in compliance with these standards, including (but not limited to) providing students with the mandated language proficiency testing within 30 days, notification of parents of the results of these tests, and their student's placement. ESL students are placed in the grade level that is appropriate for their age rather than their language competency. Students are provided with both push-in and pull-out services and are provided supports and services to help students with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a).

Mr. Wiley also ensures that relationships with students, parents and external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Mr. Wiley provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education.

Appendix A: Excel Center-Summary of 4 Campuses

22 classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and nearly all of the teaching staff at each site was observed once. Classroom observers spent 11 hour 7 minutes (667 minutes) observing 22 classrooms, 212 students, and 22 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30.3 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 9.6:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

Classroom Environment

90.9 % (20/22) had posted objectives. 100% (22/22) had posted state standards. 95.4% (21/22) used critical vocabulary. 100% (22/22) had challenging content. 81.8% (18/22) exhibited differentiation. 0% (0/22) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 59.1% (13/22) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 59.1% (13/22) were Apply/Perform Activities. 31.8% (7/22) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0.0% (0/22) were Create/Design Activities. 0.0% (0/22) of activities were found to be ineffective.

90.9% (20/22) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 40.9% (9/22) showed examples of exemplary work. 90.9% (20/22) displayed a daily schedule. 22.7% (5/22) had posted behavior expectations. 72.7% (16/22) had culturally relevant materials.

Site Visit Classroom Observations

Total Time Observing (Min)	Average Time in Classroom
667	30.3

Students Observed	Teachers Observed	Ratio (S:1T)
212	22	9.6

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total
First Interval	14	63.6%	8	36.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Second Interval	9	40.9%	13	59.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Third Interval	12	54.5%	10	45.5%	8	53.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Appendix A: Excel Center-Meadows Road

Five classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and nearly all of the teaching staff was observed once. Classroom observers spent 2 hour 35 minutes (155 minutes) observing 5 classrooms, 52 students, and 5 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 10:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

Classroom Environment

100% (5/5) had posted objectives. 100% (5/5) had posted state standards. 100% (5/5) used critical vocabulary. 100% (5/5) had challenging content. 80% (1/5) exhibited differentiation. 100% (5/5) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 100% (5/5) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 100% (5/5) were Apply/Perform Activities. 20% (1/5) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0% (0/5) were Create/Design Activities. 0% (0/5) of activities were found to be ineffective.

100% (5/5) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 20% (1/5) showed examples of exemplary work. 100% (5/5) displayed a daily schedule. 80% (4/5) had posted behavior expectations. 0% (0/5) had culturally relevant materials.

Site Visit Classroom Observations

Topic of Lesson	
Biology	English 3
English 5	Geometry
Algebra 1B	

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total
First Interval	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Second Interval	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Third Interval	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Appendix A: Excel Center-Franklin Road

Six classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and over half of the teaching staff was observed once. Classroom observers spent 3 hour 5 minutes (185 minutes) observing 6 classrooms, 44 students, and 6 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30.2 minutes, and the observed student to teacher ratio was 7:1.

Classroom Environment

100 % (6/6) had posted objectives. 100% (6/6) had posted state standards. 100% (6/6) used critical vocabulary. 100% (6/6) had challenging content. 100% (6/6) exhibited differentiation. 100% (6/6) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 100% (6/6) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 100% (6/6) were Apply/Perform Activities. 0% (0/6) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0% (0/6) were Create/Design Activities. 0% (0/6) of activities were found to be ineffective.

83% (5/6) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 17% (1/6) showed examples of exemplary work. 67% (4/6) displayed a daily schedule. 100% (6/6) had posted behavior expectations. 0% (0/6) had culturally relevant materials.

Site Visit Classroom Observations

Topic of Lesson	
ICP	English 4
English 2	Algebra I
Algebra 2	English 3

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total
First Interval	6	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Second Interval	6	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Third Interval	6	16.6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Appendix A: Excel Center-Decatur Blvd.

Five classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and nearly all of the teaching staff was observed once. Classroom observers spent 2 hour 32 minutes (152 minutes) observing 5 classrooms, 26 students, and 5 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 5.2:1.

Classroom Environment

100 % (5/5) had posted objectives. 80% (4/5) had posted state standards. 100% (5/5) used critical vocabulary. 100.0% (5/5) had challenging content. 60% (3/5) exhibited differentiation. 100% (5/5) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 100% (5/5) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 100% (5/5) were Apply/Perform Activities. 0.0% (0/5) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0.0% (0/5) were Create/Design Activities. 0% (0/4) of activities were found to be ineffective.

80% (4/5) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 20.0% (1/5) showed examples of exemplary work. 100% (5/5) displayed a daily schedule. 100 (5/5) had posted behavior expectations. 0% (0/5) had culturally relevant materials.

Site Visit Classroom Observations

Topic of Lesson	
Chemistry	Financial Foundations
Geometry	Chemistry
Algebra	

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total
First Interval	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Second Interval	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Third Interval	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Appendix A: Excel Center-Michigan Street

Seven classroom observations were performed on site using the classroom observation instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. The on site observations lasted approximately 30 minutes, and almost all of the teaching staff was observed once. Classroom observers spent 3 hours and 31 minutes (211 minutes) observing 7 classrooms, 50 students, and 7 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 30 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 7:1.

Classroom Environment

100 % (7/7) had posted objectives. 100 % (7/7) had posted state standards. 100 % (7/7) used critical vocabulary. 100% (7/7) had challenging content. 14% (1/7) exhibited differentiation. 100.0% (7/7) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 100 % (7/7) of observed activities were Remember/Understand Activities. 71% (5/7) were Apply/Perform Activities. 0% (0/7) were Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0% (0/7) were Create/Design Activities. 0% (0/7) of activities were found to be ineffective.

86% (6/7) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 0% (0/7) showed examples of exemplary work. 43% (3/7) displayed a daily schedule. 86% (6/7) had posted behavior expectations. 57% (4/7) had culturally relevant materials.

Site Visit Classroom Observations

Topic of Lesson	
Geometry	Algebra 1B
Algebra 1B	History
ICP	Math B
English 4	

Proportion of Students Engaged:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total	Recorded	% Total
First Interval	7	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Second Interval	5	71%	2	39%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Third Interval	5	71%	2	39%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%